

REMARKS

This application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action dated May 8, 2007. Claims 1 and 44-63 are present in the application. Claims 48-63 have been added to assure Applicant of a full measure of protection. Claims 2 and 44 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter, and will not be mentioned further. Claims 1 and 45-47 have been amended. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1 and 45-47 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 5,956,698 (Lacheze).

Independent Claim 1 is directed to a management system, connected to a communication line, for managing maintenance of a plurality of printing apparatuses. The claimed system comprises a reception unit, that receives a first ID for specifying a first printing apparatus having use history information showing that the first printing apparatus was managed. The reception unit also receives a second ID for specifying a second printing apparatus as a new apparatus to be managed. The first ID and the second ID are different from each other, and are transmitted via the communication line. A search unit searches for first information related to a contract corresponding to the first ID, and a generation unit generates information related to a contract for the second printing apparatus, based on the first information searched for by the search unit. Also, according to Claim 1, the contract is related to at least contract term and maintenance of the printing apparatus (page 32, lines 15-23).^v Also, the generation unit generates display information

^v It is of course to be understood that the claim scope is not limited by the details of this or any other particular embodiment that may be referred to.

for displaying the generated second information, and a transmission unit transmits the display information via the communication line.

From the Office Action, it appears that the Examiner considers that all the claim language that states specifically what is done when a new apparatus is added to the system, is met by the provisions made in *Lacheze* for accommodating the addition of new apparatuses, including in particular the provision for defining a set of one or more functions for the newly opened account (corresponding to the new apparatus), from among those functions that are available in the system.

The Office does not, however, address the arguments made in the last Amendment that *Lacheze* lacks anything corresponding to the contract corresponding to the first and the second IDs, respectively, and hence does not disclose the recited search unit that locates the first information, or the generation unit, that generates the second information. Applicants respectfully urge that in fact these features are not even hinted at by *Lacheze*.

Lacheze states that “it is useful to provide the accounting system of FIGS. 1 and 2 with update information at appropriate intervals” (col. 13, lines 54 and 55), and that “an update may include a change in rates, cost factors, thresholds and/or volume discount rates” (col. 13, lines 60-62). The contract information referred to in Claim 1, which is related to the contract term and the maintenance of the printing apparatus, completely differs from the update information of *Lacheze*. Furthermore, the generation unit of Claim 1 generates second information on the contract for the second printing apparatus based on the first information on the contract for the first printing apparatus searched for by the search unit, and further generates display information for displaying the generated second

information, which allows the user to review the contract information. *Lacheze* is silent as to the generation unit. *Lacheze* cannot teach or suggest generating contract information for a second printing apparatus to be newly managed based on that for a first printing information for a second printing apparatus to be newly managed based on that for a first printing apparatus which was managed and further generating information for allowing the user to review the newly generated contract information. For all these reasons, it is believed to be clear that Claim 1 is allowable over that patent.

Claim 48 differs from Claim 1 in that a second reception unit is newly introduced that receives a user instruction indicating whether or not a new contract for the second printing apparatus is to be made based on the contract for the first printing apparatus (page 42, line 26, to page 43, line 4), and the search unit searches for first information on the contract for the first print apparatus, if the second reception unit receives the user instruction (page 42, lines 11-27). (Claim 48 does not recite, as does Claim 1, that the first contract relates to at least one of contract term and printer maintenance, however.) *Lacheze* fails to teach or suggest this feature.

Claim 51 differs from Claim 1 in that the generation unit generates the second information on the contract for the second printing apparatus based on the machine types of the first and second printing apparatus (page 50, lines 5-24). (Claim 51, also, does not recite, as does Claim 1, that the first contract relates to at least one of contract term and printer maintenance, however.) *Lacheze* fails to teach or suggest this feature.

Each of the other independent claims is a method, computer medium or program claim corresponding to one or another of the apparatus claims discussed above, and are believed to be patentable for at least the same reasons as discussed above.

A review of the other art of record has failed to reveal anything which, in Applicants' opinion, would remedy the deficiencies of the art discussed above, as a reference against the independent claims herein. Those claims are therefore believed patentable over the art of record.

The other claims in this application are each dependent from one or another of the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed patentable for the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual consideration of the patentability of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration and allowance of the present application.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York Office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our address listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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